

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9855

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: STRAINS IN ROKG LEADERSHIP OVER KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE

1. AS KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE CONTINUES TO BUILD AND AS ROKG CASTS ABOUT FOR WAYS TO COPE WITH IT, EXISTING RIVALRIES AND STRAINS BETWEEN AND AMONG TOP ROKG OFFICIALS HAVE WORSENER. LEE HU-RAK AND THE ROK CIA ARE UNDER FIRE FROM SEVERAL QUARTERS AND THERE SEEMS TO BE A CONCERTED EFFORT ON THE PART OF OTHER SENIOR ROKG PERSONALITIES TO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM LEE. PRIME MINISTER KIM AND PRESIDENTIAL PROTECTIVE FORCE (PPF) CHIEF PAK CHONG-KYU ARE CLEARLY IN THIS CAMP. IN OTHER GOVERNMENTAL OFFICES, INCLUDING MOFA, THERE IS GUARDED BUT CLEAR UNHAPPINESS ABOUT THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING ROKG AS A RESULT OF THE KIM KIDNAPPING.

2. LEE, ALTHOUGH CLEARLY ON THE DEFENSIVE FOR THE MOMENT, REFUSES TO YIELD, AND HIS AUGUST 29 PRESS CONFERENCE IN RESPONSE TO NORTH KOREAN CHARGES THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN KIM KIDNAP IS MOST RECENT PROOF OF THIS. IN RECENT DAYS, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE HEARD

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FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES STATEMENTS WHICH, WHILE NOT

ADMITTING ROKG INVOLVEMENT IN KIM AFFAIR, LEAVE
LITTLE DOUBT THAT THESE PERSONS ARE TRYING TO ESTAB-
LISH IN OUR MIND THE IDEA THAT THE ROK CIA IS
SOMEHOW NOT QUITE A PART OF THE ROKG AND THAT WHATEVER
ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS MAY BE DIRECTED AT THE ROKG AS
A RESULT OF THE CASE SHOULD BE DIVERTED TO THE ROK
CIA AND ITS HEAD.

3. RIVALRIES BETWEEN LEE AND OTHERS GO BACK MANY
YEARS. THEY RESURFACED WITH THE YUN PIL-YONG CASE
LAST MARCH AND BECAME EVEN CLEARER IN THE SUBSEQUENT
STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE ROK CIA AND THE ARMY SECURITY
COMMAND. UNTIL KIM TAE-CHUNG CASE, THE PRINCIPAL
ACTORS THIS YEAR HAD BEEN LEE HU-RAK, YUN PIL-YONG, AND
MAJOR GENERAL KANG CHANG-SONG, FORMER ASC COMMANDER.
LEE EMERGED SOMEWHAT BATTERED BUT APPARENTLY
VICTORIOUS FROM HIS STRUGGLE WITH KANG. THE KIM
CASE HAS NOW BROUGHT PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG-PIL
AND PPF DIRECTOR PAK CHONG-KYU VERY MUCH INTO THE
PICTURE. WHAT WE SEE NOW, IN ADDITION TO THE EFFORT
TO DISASSOCIATE FROM LEE HU-RAK, IS RATHER ACTIVE
MANEUVERING BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND PAK FOR POSITIONS
FROM WHICH EACH HOPES TO BE ABLE TO STRENGTHEN HIS
POSITION VIS-A-VIS LEE. THE ATMOSPHERE OF ROVALRY
AND SUSPICION BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER KIM AND LEE,
PARTICULARLY, HAS HEIGHTENED SIGNIFICANTLY.

4. LEE, ALTHOUGH THE OBVIOUS SCAPEGOAT IF THE
GOVERNMENT NEEDS ONE, HAS SURVIVED DIFFICULT SITUATIONS
IN THE PAST. ALSO, PRESIDENT PARK'S ATTITUDE IS
NOT CLEAR. UNTIL LEE CLEARLY WINS OR LOSES, HOWEVER
THE STRAINS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE
ROKG WILL CONTINUE.
ADLER

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